

had deposited her money in bills, and was afraid that if they were burned up the bank would not give her any others. Jurgis made fun of her for this, for he was a man and was proud of his superior knowledge, telling her that the bank had fireproof vaults, and all its millions of dollars hidden safely away in them.

However, one morning Marija took her detour, and, to her horror and dismay, saw a crowd of people in front of the bank, filling the avenue solid for half a block. All the blood went out of her face for terror. She broke into a run, shouting to the people to ask what was the matter, but not stopping to hear what they answered till she had come to where the throng was so dense that she could no longer advance. There was a "run on the bank," they told her then, but she did not know what that was, and turned from one person to another, trying in an agony of fear to make out what they meant. Had something gone wrong with the bank? Nobody was sure, but they thought so. Couldn't she get her money? There was no telling; the people were afraid not, and they were all trying to get it. It was too early yet to tell anything—the bank would not open for nearly three hours. So in a frenzy of despair Marija began to claw her way toward the doors of this building, through a throng of men, women and children all excited as herself. It was a scene of wild confusion, women shrieking and wringing their hands and fainting, and men fighting and trampling down everything in their way. In the midst of the melee Marija recollected that she did not have her bank book, and could not get her money anyway, so she fought her way out and started on a run for home. This was fortunate for her, for a few minutes later the police reserves arrived.

In half an hour Marija was back, Teta Elzbieta with her, both of them breathless with running and sick with fear. The crowd was now formed in a line extending for several blocks, with half a hundred policemen keeping guard, and so there was nothing for them to do but to take their places at the end of it. At 9 o'clock the bank opened and began to pay the waiting throng; but then, what good did it do Marija, who saw 3,000 people before her—enough to take out the last penny of a dozen banks?

To make matters worse, a drizzling rain came up and soaked them to the skin; yet all the morning they stood there, creeping slowly toward the goal; all the afternoon they stood there, heart sick, seeing that the hour of closing was coming and that they were going to be left out. Marija made up her mind that, come what might, she would stay there and keep her place; but as nearly all did the same, all through the long, cold night, she got very little closer to the bank for that. Toward evening Jurgis came; he had heard the story from the children, and he brought some food and dry wraps, which made a little easier.

The next morning, before daybreak, came a bigger crowd than ever, and more policemen from downtown. Marija held on like grim death, and toward afternoon she got into the bank and got her money—all in big silver dollars, a handkerchief full. When she had once got her hands on them her fear vanished and she wanted to put them back again; but the man at the window was savage and said that the bank would receive no more deposits from those who had taken part in the run. So Marija was forced to take her dollars home with her, watching to right and left, expecting every instant that some one would try to rob her; and when she got home she was not much better off. Until she could find another bank there was nothing to do but sew them up in her clothes, and so Marija went about for a week or more, loaded down with bullion, and afraid to cross the street in front of the house, because Jurgis told her she would sink out of sight in the mud.

Weighted this way she made her way to the yards, again in fear, this time to see if she had lost her place; but fortunately about 10 per cent of the working people of Pack-

ingtown had been depositors in that bank and it was not convenient to discharge that many at once. The cause of the panic had been the attempt of a policeman to arrest a drunken man in a saloon next door, which had drawn a crowd at the hour the people were on their way to work, and so started the "run."

About this time Jurgis and Ona also began a bank account. Besides having paid Jonas and Marija, they had almost paid for their furniture, and could have that little sum to count on. So long as each of them could bring home nine or ten dollars a week, they were able to get along finely. Also election day came round again, and Jurgis made half a week's wages out of that, all net profit. It was a very close election that year, and the echoes of the battle reached even to Packingtown. The two rival sets of grafters hired halls and set off fireworks and made speeches, to try to get the people interested in the matter. Although Jurgis did not understand it all, he knew enough by this time to realize that it was not supposed to be right to sell your vote. However, as every one did it, and his refusal to join would not have made the slightest difference in the results, the idea of refusing would have seemed absurd. And it ever came into his head.

Now chill winds and shortening days began to warn them that the winter was coming again. It seemed as if the respite had been too short—they had not had time enough to get ready for it; but still it came, inexorably, and the humed look came back into the eyes of little Stanislas. The prospect struck fear to the heart of Jurgis also, for he knew that Ona was not fit to face the cold and the snowdrifts this year. And suppose that some day when a blizzard struck them and the cars were not running, Ona should have to give it up, and should come the next day to find that her place had been given to some one who lived nearer and could be depended upon?

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

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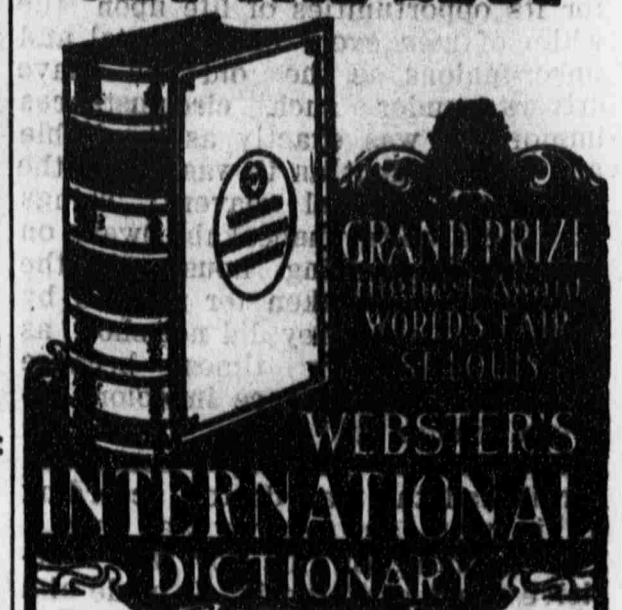
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